

For Immediate Release

1/23/08

Circle of Friends Comfort Shawl Project

The **Circle of Friends Comfort Shawl Project** is a new charitable knitting project, sponsored by **Pocket Meadow Farm Fiber Arts** in Berkeley Springs, WV. This project intends to harness the efforts of a community of knitters, working individually, to create warm, handmade shawls for those in need.

Using yarn donated by **Pocket Meadow Farm's** owner, Ellen Kardell, knitters will pledge to produce a shawl that will be donated by the **Circle of Friends** project. Working with area churches, hospitals, and nursing homes, **Pocket Meadow Farm** will arrange to place the shawls where they can be given to people in crisis situations. They hope that the handwork of a caring knitter can help the ill and bereaved feel surrounded by a circle of compassionate friends.

Shawls, in particular, are comforting by their very nature, because of the physical embrace and warmth that they bring. In the US, shawl ministries are a growing grassroots movement. Sometimes referred to as healing, or prayer shawl groups, they reflect the positive energy, compassion and love that go into the work. Knitters know that their hopes, prayers and healing thoughts can be directly channeled into the tangible items they make.

“The tactile nature of fine fiber combined with textured patterns can have a meditative and calming effect that can best be appreciated with the hands,” says Ms. Kardell. “The shawl is designed as much to be stroked, as to be looked at.” The sample pattern that she provides to the **Circle of Friends** knitters is suitable for advanced beginners, and it is designed so that the finished product's beauty can be easily accessible to those with low vision or cognitive impairment.

The mission of the project is to hand knit shawls for those in need of the comforting hug and warmth that a handmade shawl provides. When

created with mindfulness and care, knitted items can give comfort to the user. Knitting can also be beneficial to the person performing the handwork. The repetitive, meditative nature of knitting helps create a peaceful state, allowing the knitter to focus less on daily stresses, and be responsive to the needs of others.

Circle of Friends encourages knitters to write a short note to the recipient, telling how thought, love, and prayer is put into their work with the hopes that the shawl will bring comfort during a difficult time.

“In this era of mass production, throw-away goods, and global unrest and violence, the work of a few caring knitters can and will make a difference — one stitch at a time,” Ms. Kardell adds.

Circle of Friends welcomes individuals of all faiths and spiritual beliefs to join in the project, and hopes that as the project grows, other sponsors and groups will be inspired to unite in the effort.

Pocket Meadow Farm holds open house evenings at their shop to support knitters involved in the **Circle of Friends** project. Knitters are welcome to stop by any time to work on their shawls, get technical assistance with the knitting, or just chat about their progress. (See <http://pocketmeadowfarm.net> for scheduling information). Others in the community are welcome to visit and view the donated shawls that will be displayed periodically in the shop.

for more information, contact:

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